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1962/11/01

P 116

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action
EUR~~SECRET~~Control: 334
Rec'd: November 1, 1962~~BENY~~

DEPARTMENT OF STATE AT 4:08 P.M.

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FROM: Bern

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 210, November 1, 7 PM FOR EO OR PA EXEMPTIONS

PRIORITY

ACTION DEPARTMENT 210, INFORMATION USUN PRIORITY 4, GENEVA
PRIORITY 13.

Reference: NIACT Department telegram 195.

Foreign Minister Wahlen opened today's Tour d'Horizon (reported separately Embassy telegram 211) stating his main current concern is possible role GOS or ICRC in Cuban crisis. In nutshell, GOS would not itself serve; would prefer not, but would reluctantly agree ICRC inspect ships providing all three nations, including Cuba, accept

1. RE SWITZERLAND:

"FPD considering what action we should take should Switzerland be approached by UN, as was Sweden," Wahlen told me. "Normally would say yes to such request, but our representation of other nations in Cuba-particularly United States-raises question dual interests. We would therefore expect to decline."

2. RE ICRC:

Noting U Thant had approached ICRC to inspect Cuba-bound ships, Wahlen took pains make clear connection between GOS and ICRC. "No official relationship. GOS however serves as depository international convention; all ICRC members are Swiss citizens who discuss matters this magnitude with FPD."

Wahlen's government

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-2- 210, November 1, 7 p.m., from Bern

Wahlen's government "reluctant see ICRC embark on course of political character. Present proposal transcends original terms of reference. Red Cross must preserve its virginity; know no politics; be concerned only with relieving suffering. Whenever ICRC goes beyond non-political role, it gets in trouble. Example: At New Delhi both CHICOMS and India walked out over double membership Formosa and CHICOMS. Threatened similar action at centenary convention scheduled Geneva 1963 caused nature meeting be changed to Congress of National Societies. In capacity depositary international convention, GOS plans address note to governments concerned "pointing out regret over foregoing and dangers politicizing Red Cross. There should be no recognized or unrecognized governments in Red Cross; recognition only of need relieve sufferings of individuals. GOS takes same position re humanitarian role UN specialized agencies; believes political activities should be confined parent UNO; Cuba is UN's specific task under its own terms reference."

Nevertheless, Wahlen mindful urgent practical matter now arises as to who is actually in present position implement Cuban inspection. Again repeating this should be UN job, he said, "Korea commission included Czechs and Poles who not neutrals, not even neutralists, but chosen by USSR as "neutral on Soviet side". True neutrals exist only in Europe; this creates problem of geographical diversification. To escape this problem, UN could select one single neutral country such as Sweden." But Wahlen takes Sweden's offer of only seven officers to UN as evidence it would not accept.

Dilemma forces consideration other instruments, notably ICRC. Reasoning outlined above inclines Wahlen advise ICRC members reply UN as follows: "Proposal exceeds ICRC terms of reference, but for this one instance we will serve, providing (1) It be fully understood no precedent created, and (2) If United States, USSR and Cuba all three, as partners in good faith, ask ICRC to serve."

Paul Ruegger now en route New York discuss ICRC terms of reference with UN, in dual capacity ICRC member (now on leave to permanent court of arbitration) and trusted former FPD official (Minister to Italy/

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-3- 210, November 1, 7 p.m., from Bern

Italy, United Kingdom).

Above emphasizes need Department inform this Mission earliest
re plans involving GOS or instrumentality related to it, since
FPD may raise point with us at any time.

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